

A DISCOURSE FOR A REVIVAL SEASON NO. 608

A SERMON
DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, JANUARY 8, 1865,
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“Behold the voice of the cry of the daughter of My people because of them that dwell in a far country: Is not the LORD in Zion? is not her king in her? Why have they provoked me to anger with their graven images, and with strange vanities? The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.”
Jeremiah 8:19-20.*

THESE words, as they stand in the book of Jeremiah, were probably meant to set forth the sin of Israel. The prophet’s heart is very full of sadness, he can hear the shrieks and cries of the people in the streets of Jerusalem. They are moaning for sorrow because of the oppression of the Chaldeans—the nation that dwelt afar off, and in the midst of their bitterness and woe, they remember the God whom they had forgotten in their prosperity, but this remembrance is not a gracious one, they do not remember Him to humble themselves before Him, but to bring accusations against Him.

They inquire, “Is not the LORD in Zion? is not her king in her?” As if they felt, “The people of the Lord, the people of the Lord are we, and therefore He is bound to send us deliverance.” They accuse the faithfulness of JEHOVAH because He justly suffers them to be downtrodden for their sins. Then the Lord, speaking by the prophet, tells them the reason why, although present among them, He did not help them, “Why have they provoked me to anger with their graven images, and with strange vanities?” If they believed Him to be present, why did they set up false gods? If they considered Him to be their God, why did they turn aside to the vanities of the heathen? His presence among them had been the occasion of greater provocation, since they had mocked Him to His face, and set up idols in His own temple.

In the twentieth verse he represents the people as breaking forth into another dolorous and lamentable cry, “We thought that God would help us in the days of harvest, but the harvest is past. We dreamed that He would chase away our enemies when the summer months had come, but the summer is ended, and still Chaldea has her foot upon Judea’s neck, we still drink the wormwood and the gall, and our enemies open their mouths at us. ‘The harvest is past, and the summer is ended, and we are not saved.’”

We find in the New Testament that sometimes the apostles used the language of the prophets in other than the original sense. Finding the prophetic words to be expressive of a sense which they themselves wished to convey to the people, they did, as it were, take the horses and chariot of the prophet, and drive them in another direction. So I intend to do this morning. It strikes me that there is no text in Scripture more applicable to our present condition than this. “Behold the voice of the cry of the daughter of my people because of them that dwell in a far country.” We have been crying, and pleading with God for the multitude of far-off sinners who know nothing of Him.

We will begin, therefore, by dwelling upon *the cry*, then comes *a question*, a question much requiring earnest thought at present—“Is not the Lord in Zion? is not her king in her?”—then we have *another question*, which may cause searching of heart both among saints and sinners—“Why have they provoked me to anger with their graven images and with strange vanities?”—and our text concludes with *another cry*, not the cry of gracious souls for others, but the cry of graceless sinners for themselves, “The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.”

I. At the outset we have in the text, A CRY.

Observe the word “*Behold.*” I have told you many times, that wherever the word “behold” occurs in Scripture, it is a sort of signpost to show that there is good entertainment within. God puts this “N.B.” in the margin that we may observe well what it is that He is saying to us. The “behold” here is the mark of astonishment. We are to “Behold the voice of the cry of the daughter of my people” as an unusual thing. So seldom does Israel cry unto the Lord, she is so negligent of prayer, she is so silent when she ought to be incessant in her petitions, that when at last she does cry, her voice is a wonder in God’s ears.

I have felt this week in the state of mind which is indicated by that interjection, “Behold!” When I sat on this platform on Monday night, and marked your sobs, and tears, and heard the suppressed sighs and groans of the great multitude then assembled, I could not but say, “Behold!” And yet it ought not to be a wonder, it ought not to be a strange thing for God’s people to be in earnest, or for sinners to feel brokenness of heart. If prayer be the Christian’s breath, why then, to see a multitude breathing, should never be a spectacle. If to pray unto God be the Christian’s daily privilege, then to approach the throne of God with prevalent earnestness should never be looked upon with astonishment.

Yet, brethren, we must frankly confess that it is so. True prayer is an astonishing thing, prevalent intercession is an amazing thing, and if you want to see something that will really thrill you with a holy wonder, attend a prayer meeting where the Holy Ghost is present in the fullness of His power, and where the brethren pray, not as a mere matter of form, but as if filled with all the fullness of God.

Such meetings as we have had during the past week are things to marvel at. *Behold:* it has become a wonder for God’s people really to cry. Ah! there are some of you to whom weeping over sinners would be a novelty, some of you professors to whom agonizing for souls would be a new thing, you do pray for sinners in your usual prayers, but you do not know what it is to travail in birth for souls, you never feel as if your hearts would break if souls are not saved. You do not feel the burden of the Lord laid upon you till you are crushed in the dust and made to groan out, “God have mercy upon these poor perishing souls.” With some of you it would be a great wonder to be really on a blaze, and if we heard you cry, we would be compelled to say, “Behold the voice of the cry of my people.”

Notice how this prayer is described. It is *a cry*, “Behold the cry.” A cry is the most natural form of utterance. It is a natural expression made up of pain and desire for relief. A cry is the first sign of human life, as if to indicate that we are most alive when most we cry, as if a cry were the way to life and the path to higher life ever afterwards. A cry! There is something cutting and piercing in it, it cleaves its way up to the throne of God.

A spiritual cry! It is born in the heart, down deep in the inner recesses of regenerate nature. It is not a mere lip-worship, it is not a thing of the tongue and of the jaw. A cry! it comes from the very soul, and therefore it reaches to God’s ear and God’s heart. A cry! it is a plaintive, bitter, painful thing, and mark you, God’s people seldom get a blessing in the conversion of souls till their prayer turns into a cry mingled with weeping, and if there be sobbing and groaning, it is none the worse. You know, dear friends, the difference between the prayers which are not cries, and those which are.

When a brother merely prays what we call *prayer*, he stands up and utters very proper words, very edifying, very suitable, no doubt, and then he has done. Another brother comes forward, he wants a blessing, he tells the Lord what he desires, he takes the promises, he wrestles with God and then he seems to say, “I will not let you go unless you bless me.” He cannot be satisfied till, with the cry of, “Abba, Father,” he has come before the throne and really obtained an audience with the Most High.

Note again, for every word of our text is suggestive, it is “Behold the *voice* of the cry of the daughter of my people.” It is not enough to be earnest, you must know what you are earnest about, the cry must have a voice which is as far as possible understood by yourself, and a voice which has a meaning in it before God. I am afraid there have been some meetings against which the charge of fanaticism might be very fairly brought, because, while there was an admirable earnestness which it were well for colder Christians to copy, there was a lack of understanding, a want of really knowing what they were at.

Beloved, we must be clear when we come before God that we really are *asking for something*. Our soul must prepare itself by meditation upon its own needs, and upon the needs of the people, to express

an intelligent desire before God. Cry! Cry aloud as much as you will, but remember, when “the voice said cry,” the prophet said, “What shall I cry?” And so when I come before God in prayer, I must ask Him, “What shall I cry?” and I must get a clear sense of what it is at which I am driving. For if an archer takes no aim, he may pull his bow with all his might, but he certainly is not likely to succeed. I must direct my prayer unto God, as David says, pull my bow, direct the arrow, take aim at the center of the target, and then, when the arrow flies it is likely to reach its place.

“In the morning will I direct my prayer unto you, and will look up.” What a mercy it is that our cries have a voice with God! Why, sometimes, when our cries have no voice for us, they have a voice with God. “The Spirit itself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.” When my desires are such that there are no words in any human language which could possibly express them, my heart does but let fall a tear, or lift a glance to heaven, and there is a voice in my cry. “Lord, take the meaning, take the meaning,” said a poor man in an earnest prayer, to which I remember to have once listened—“I cannot tell You, Lord, what I want, but take the meaning, take the meaning of my poor stammering words.”

There is a voice in our prayers as a church, and I think it is, “Father, have mercy upon souls, Father, arise, and let Your kingdom come, and let the name of Your Son Jesus be honored in the hearts of many, Father, let the Spirit who dwells in His church now work mightily, and get to Your name great renown in the midst of the dense crowd among whom we dwell.” O God, this is the voice of the cry of Your people.

Further, study *the matter* of the voice—it was “*for them that dwell in a far country.*” In what a far country does every sinner dwell! “He took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.” The sinner who is nearest to God is still in a far country. You moralists, how far off you are from God.

Dear Mr. Offord said the other night, “Can any of you tell how far off God is from the unpardoned sinner? Remember, you are on this side of sin, and God is on the other side of it, but can anyone tell how far God is from the other side of sin! His pure and holy eyes cannot even look on it. Then, how far must He be from it! You are just so far off from God as God is from sin, added to the breadth and length of sin itself. See your sin towering like a stupendous Alp, you cannot cross that barrier, and God is far away on the other side of that mountain. This is your wretched position, afar off from God.”

Now, the prayers, I hope, of God’s people have been going up for all the far-off ones, that infinite mercy would make them nigh by the blood of Christ. There are certain special far-off ones whom we ought to mention in our prayers, and whom we ought to labor after in our Christian efforts. Do not forget the harlot when you pray, illustrious trophies of divine grace have been snatched from the kennel and the pavement. Do not forget the poorest of the poor, the vilest of the vile, and those who dwell in haunts where theft, ignorance, and crime do fester. Pray for these most, they most need your entreaties, and let your prayer be a cry—a cry like that of Jesus when He wept over Jerusalem.

It would be one of the healthiest things in the world for you Christian people, if you were to spend a day with city missionaries and Bible women, in the very worst of our back slums. If your cry did not come up then for those who dwell in a far country, I despair of your knowing what true religion means.

The fact is, we do not face the sin of London. We, like the ostrich, bury our heads and shut our eyes, so as to avoid seeing the evil. We can so easily get to our places of worship along the front streets, in which there is a fringe of respectability and order, and so on, that we forget the dark lanes, the blind alleys, the dingy courts, the places where poverty, suffering, sin, and ignorance abound. O dear friends, if we do not go further, if we do not think of foreign lands, we still have reason enough for putting up the voice of our cry for those who are “in a far country,” and yet dwell at home in England.

Still, I must have you remark another word in the text—for “those *that dwell* in a far country,” there are some of you who make a long abode in a far country. You were afar off from God eleven years ago, I preached at you then. You were afar off from God five or six years ago, when revivals were frequent.

When this Tabernacle was opened, you came here and took your seat, and you were afar off from God then, and you are afar off now.

The fact is, you have taken up your dwellings, you have made a settlement in one of the parishes of the City of Destruction, you are making out a claim to be enrolled in the devil's register, you dwell in the far-off land. If you were uneasy and felt yourselves to be strangers and foreigners in the land of destruction, how would I clap my hands for joy, for you would soon be rid of your old master if you once felt sick of him. But no! you dwell in that country, and I suppose, some of you always will do so, till you are taken from it to make your lodging place in the flames of hell forever. O, may God prevent it! But I fear it of some of you.

There are some who listen to my words who are made to feel under them. I heard but the other day of one who was set a trembling and shivering under the Gospel, he could not but come and hear though it was always like a great hammer to him. His friends and companions by much persevering effort laughed him out of coming here, they could not bear that he should come to hear the despised preacher, though he had been a dreadful drunkard and swearer before, and was then sober, yet they preferred his drunkenness to his coming here.

Bitterly have they had to rue it, for he went back to his sins and became as gross a sinner as before, and then when he was killing himself with sin, they began to wish him to come here again, but it was too late, he would not come again, perhaps he dared not. A dreadful remorse settled upon him, and under its influence he put an end to his own existence. Take care, any of you who hate the Gospel, that you do not laugh at other men's convictions, and when the Gospel does come home with power to any, do not be the devil's advocate and stand up and plead against God. God forgive those who do this, and may none of us be guilty of it!

But oh! you dwell in this far country, some of you, you are easy in a state of danger and condemnation. It was only the other night, when we met at St. John's Wood, that a man came into the vestry, made broken-hearted through the address of the evening. My dear brother Stott soon had him on his knees, and began to pray with him, and to my grief this man said he used to hear me at Exeter Hall, and was much better in his outward life, while hearing me he thought of religion and lived soberly, but the Tabernacle was too far for him to come to it, and he would not go anywhere else, and therefore he went back to the world, and what seemed to be like a work of grace, proved to be only a work of nature.

Let us be anxious concerning those who dwell in the far country, and are only for a time, as it were, taken out as on an excursion into the land of light, but who still have their parish settlement in the far country, and are numbered among the citizens of the City of Destruction, and are not among the people of God. O, for a cry this morning, another cry from God's people for those who dwell in a far country.

One very consoling thought is in the text. I must only hint at it. The cry is "*The cry of the daughter of my people.*" O beloved, it is so sweet to think that our prayers, poor as they are, are the prayers of God's own people, and therefore they must be heard. You will say, "Is that a right argument?" Oh! yes it is. "If you being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children." Remember that is how Christ puts it. You are the Lord's children, therefore He will hear you. If you were strangers it might be a different thing. Our prayers might very readily be pulled to pieces by critics, but our Father will not criticize them, because they are the cries of His own children. I do not think we set such store by believer's prayers as we ought to do. Would you let your child constantly cry to you and not answer him? I know you would not.

Put it differently, would you let your brother in Christ plead with you and not grant him his desire if you could grant it? You have not a brother's heart if you would. Or I will touch you more closely. We love our wives—if your wife should ask for anything that would be for her good, and you could give it, would you refuse it? Husband, would you refuse it? You are no husband if you did. Look at Christ, the Husband of the Church, do you think He will refuse the cry of His own spouse? What, shall His own dear bride come before Him, and embrace His feet, and say, "I will not let You go except You bless me," and shall He who has espoused her unto Himself in faithfulness, say to her, "I have bidden you

seek me, but I will not be found of you, I have commanded you to knock, but the door shall not be opened, I have told you to ask, but you shall not receive”? O, slander not my loving Lord like this—

*“He feels at His heart all our sighs and our groans,
For we are most near Him, His flesh and His bones.”*

Let us rejoice together in the spirit of prayer which God has given us. Let us try to foster it, let us be much in the exercise of it. During the coming week let us still continue to meet together to intercede at the throne of grace, and this is my reason for urging it upon you, that God has promised that when we cry, He will hear us, “He shall call upon me, and I will answer him,” “Whatsoever you shall ask the Father in my name, He will give it you.” “With long life will I satisfy him, and show him my salvation.”

II. We will now turn to the QUESTION, “Is not the Lord in Zion? is not her king in her?”

I will answer that question at once in the affirmative. “The Lord is in Zion; her king is in the midst of her.” Having answered this question, it suggests many more. Let me put them to you. If the Lord be indeed in Zion, and the king is in the midst of her, *why do we pray as if He were not?* I find no fault with the prayers of my brethren when they ask for an outpouring of the Spirit—what they mean by their prayers is a very proper thing, but I am not certain that the expression is altogether the best that might be used. The Spirit of God *is* with His people. I could not, last Monday night, ask to have the Spirit of God poured out, for *it was there*. If at any time the Holy Spirit was with any men on earth, even at Pentecost, He was here last Monday night, as those present must have felt. We had not so much to ask for it as to be thankful for it.

When two or three of you meet together in Christ’s name, do not meet unbelievably. Remember that He has said, “There am I in the midst of you.” Be content with that assurance, you have not, as it were, to mount up to heaven, that is, to bring Christ down, nor to descend into the earth, that is, to bring Him up from the depths, He is with you! “Know you not that your bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit?” “God dwells in you.” The Holy Spirit is given to the church as a perpetual and abiding Comforter, and in the church the Spirit of God always dwells.

Do not pray, therefore, dear friends, as if God were not with you. “Is not the Lord in Zion? is not her king in the midst of her?” Do not pray, therefore, like the priests of Baal, as though your God were on a journey, or needed to be awakened out of sleep. He is with you, ready to answer by fire, if, like Elijah, you have but faith with which to challenge His promise and His power.

Is the Lord with you? Then in the next place, let me ask you this question. *Why do you despond because of your own weakness?* “We have not a sufficient number of ministers, we have little wealth, we have few places of public worship, we have few gifted members,” and so on. So some unbelievably talk. “Is not the Lord in Zion? is not her king in her?” What more do you want? “Oh! we would like to be strong.” Why would you be strong? That you must be disqualified to be used by God? “No,” say you. Well, but you would be. What did the Lord say by the mouth of His servant Gideon? “The people are too many for me.” I never heard that the Lord said, “The people are too few”—never! “The people are too many.”

If Samson had the choice of weapons with which to rout his enemies, if he wished to do it in such a way as to make the feat illustrious, if there were before him a cannon, a fifty-pounder, and the jawbone of an ass, which would he take? Why, any fool can kill the enemy with a cannon, but it takes a Samson to smite them with the jawbone of an ass. And so, when God has the choice of weapons, and He always has, He chooses the weaker weapon, that He may get for Himself the greater renown. My brother, glory in your infirmities—thank God for your weaknesses. There is room for God when you are empty, but when you are so full and so strong, and have such excellent machinery, and can do the work so well, why then you will attempt to do without your God, and a failure will be the result. But, O beloved—

“When I am weak, then am I strong,

Grace is my shield, and Christ my song.”

Let this silence forever all your cavillings about weakness in Christian duty, “Is not the Lord in Zion? is not her king in the midst of her?” Did I hear you say, “I am a feeble woman, and I have too much work to do for God. I had better, perhaps, curtail it, or give it up”? My sister, now that you are weaker, try to do more, for now there is more room for your God. “Oh! I am a trembling, humble, unknown man, with but little talent, and what I have done has been about as much as I can do—I am afraid to venture more.” My brother, venture more, get on to the ground of “*I cannot, but God can,*” that is safe ground. “I can” is like the ice on which the boy tries to slide, and it lets him in, but “I cannot, but God can,” is *terra firma*—stand there and you stand safely. There can never come a shock to the man who rests on the Eternal Rock—God all-sufficient. Rest on that and be glad.

Again, this question provokes another one. If God is with us, *why these great fears about the prosperity of the Church?* “Dr. Colenso becomes an infidel, Stanley becomes something very suspicious, multitudes of ministers, so called, become Puseyites—what will become of the Church of Christ?” What will become of her? She will nestle where she always did nestle, beneath the eternal wings, and the more she gets rid of all her carnal confidences the better for her. “Oh! what will become of true religion?” Beloved, become of true religion! it will go on winning and conquering, and with Christ upon the white horse of victory, riding in her forefront, truth shall march on conquering and to conquer till He shall come whose right it is to reign. Be not discouraged, “Is not her king in the midst of her?”

Every now and then, when we try a new scheme, certain prudent brethren come and pull our ears a bit, and they say, “It is more than you can do, you must be prudent.” Yes, we are prudent, we claim to be prudent, we claim to have the highest prudence, for we reckon it always prudent to believe God, and always prudent to act upon God’s promise, and not according to carnal policy, nor the judgments of our proud, self-conceited, ignorant flesh. Brethren, if the king is in the midst of her, *let us go on and conquer.*

You think you will never see such days as Pentecost, why not? “Is not the Lord in Zion? is not her king in her?” You fear you will never see such wonders as were wrought by Whitefield and Wesley, “Is not the Lord in Zion? is not her king in her?” You fancy that Ireland will never receive the Gospel, you think that heathen nations will never lay aside their idolatry. “Is not the Lord in Zion? is not her king in the midst of her?” You conceive that this is not the age of miracles, and you condemn us to go on in the everlasting jog-trot of propriety, in the do-nothing style of prescription, keeping in the perpetual cart-rut of conventionality, and never daring to blaze out a path for ourselves, “Is not the Lord in Zion? is not her king in the midst of her?” You do not believe there will be a thousand souls converted under one sermon, you do not think it is likely that the church will be increased by hundreds in a day, or in a month, “Is not the Lord in Zion? is not her king in the midst of her?”

But, dear brethren, the God of Zion is here, the king of Zion is here. I grant you, we do not sufficiently recognize His presence, we are not, as we should be, obedient to His commands, but I charge you, O you soldiers of the cross, believe in the presence of your Captain, and press where you see His helmet amidst the din of war. His cross is the great emblazoned banner which leads you on to glory. Press forward to suffer, to deny yourselves, to bear witness for Christ, for the battle is the Lord’s, and the King Himself fights in the van. “Her king is in the midst of her.” I want to see you trying deeds of daring, noble deeds of consecration, generous gifts of liberality. I want you to be more earnest in prayer, more incessant in supplication, but, at the same time, more venturesome in your actions, more daring in your devotedness to Christ. The King is in the midst of her, the Lord is in Zion still.

Sinner, I must leave this point, but there is one word of encouragement for you—

*“Jesus sits on Zion’s hill,
He receives poor sinners still.”*

He is in Zion, not on Sinai. Come to Him, just as you are, come to Him, for He is ready to accept you. The King with the silver scepter in His hand holds it out to every broken-hearted sinner. Come and touch it, He will give you perfect pardon in an instant, if your soul does but touch the silver scepter of His grace presented to you in Christ Jesus.

III. Time, however, will not stop for me, and therefore let us go on to the third point. That is, ANOTHER QUESTION. “Why have they provoked me to anger with their graven images and with strange vanities?” Here is *a question for the Lord’s people*.

It becomes a very solemn thing when God is in His Church how that Church behaves herself. Suppose that Church to set up false principles, if her King were not there she might take the kings of the earth to be her head. But dare she do that when her King Himself is there? She might begin to lean upon the civil arm if her God were not in her, but if her God be in her will she venture to do that in the face of the presence of God? Will she build up with untempered mortar the walls of human confidence, and rest upon an arm of flesh when JEHOVAH is looking on?

In the matter of gospel ordinances it is a very important thing that we keep these ordinances as they were delivered. If the King were not in Zion it would not matter whether I practiced believers’ baptism or unbelievers’ baptism, but if He has commanded believers’ baptism how dare I baptize unbelievers in the presence of the King in Zion? How dare I profane His own ordinance to what it was never intended? It becomes a solemn question, therefore. If the King be in Zion, I must mind what doctrines I preach, the King is there to hear me, God is there to observe me.

If God be in Zion, again, we must take care no wrong principles be let in. What! shall I allow the King’s enemies to eat and drink before the King’s own throne? Shall I wait upon the King’s foes and treat them as my friends when He is looking upon me with eyes of love? Let me take heed lest I prove a hypocrite and receive anger instead of love! Certainly He will look upon my sins with increased wrath if I indulge them in His presence. Is God in Zion? Beloved Christian brother, how dare you set up that idol in your heart? Is it your child? Your wife? What is it? Can you worship idols when the King is in Zion, when God is in the midst of her?

My dear friend, how can you be so worldly, so money-grasping? How is it that you can make wealth the main objective of life when the King is in Zion? If He did not know about your worldliness, if He did not know about your coldness of heart, if He did not mark your inconsistency, if He could not see you in the path of sin, then I might not plead with you, but O Christian men and women, when God is present, how careful should we be.

And *He is* present in His Church. Judas, where are you this morning, for the Lord JEHOVAH is here in Zion, He has come to search Jerusalem with candles, and to punish the men who are settled upon their lees. What will He do with you? You think it a good thing to have God in Zion, but you have desired in this, as far as you are concerned, a day of darkness and not of light, for when He comes, He shall be as a consuming fire, and as fullers’ soap. The Lord’s special presence in His Church always involves a season of purification. A church may go on with dead members for twenty years, but when the Lord comes, as soon as the wind sweeps through the forest, the dead branches crack and fall from the tree. A visitation from God to this church will try you, it is *all* a blessing, but *partly* a trial.

I believe that in every society and every church where the presence of God comes, instead of the dead calm which they formerly enjoyed, there usually comes some outbreak, on the part of the flesh, against the powers of the Spirit, and they are discovered to be hypocrites, who otherwise might have gone on the whole of their lives with their vain profession—boasting in what they did not possess. Well, we must prepare for this ordeal. If God be in Zion, let us not provoke Him to anger with our idolatry, nor with our strange vanities, but let us purge and humble ourselves before God.

But, then, this text has a particular voice *to sinners*. I want you to listen to me, you who are unconverted, while I just read this text slowly. You have been saying, “God is in the midst of His people—how is it I have not had a blessing?” I will ask you this question, “Why have they provoked me to anger with their graven images and with strange vanities?”

I will turn that inquiry into English—it is in Hebrew now, “Why have you provoked me to anger with your drunkenness and with your mixing with vain companions? Do not ask why I have not called you by my grace—do not ask why you are not among the people of God. Answer my question: Why have you provoked me to anger by indulging the lusts of the flesh, by leaving the paths of chastity and virtue, when you knew the right and chose the wrong?”

Do not ask why the Word is not blessed to you, do not ask why you do not enjoy the prayer meeting, answer my question first. Why have you provoked me to anger with your tricks in trade, with your Sabbath-breaking, with your lying, with your loose songs, with your mixing up with worldly company, with your profanity? Do not ask me why the holy dew has not dropped on you, do not ask me why the Holy Wind has not come to quicken you, but answer this, ‘Why have you provoked me to anger with your sins?’”

Why, some of you have provoked God to anger these twenty or thirty years. I hear of you every now and then. You love *me*, I know you do, and you dare not leave my ministry, you cannot leave it, though it is full often a heart-searching ministry to you. God make it more so! But, every now and then, there comes an outbreak with you undecided ones. You must have the drink again, or you must go forth to lechery or sin.

So it is with you, you would be saved, but you must be damned, you would have Christ, but you must have your sins, you would like to go to heaven, but you want to taste the sweets of damnation’s dainties on the road! How is it you will be such fools as to keep your filthy idols? My God, take You the hammer and break their idols! O my God, be You the great Iconoclast, and dash down the altars of their lusts, and clear a temple for Yourself! You say “Amen” to that, I hope you do. Then God hear your cry this morning.

Through the eternal Savior who drove the buyers and the sellers out of the temple with a scourge of small cords, and overturned the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves, and said, “Take these things hence,” this day, may He come into your heart and overturn your sins, and say, “Take these things hence, I have bought that man with blood. I have loved him with an everlasting love. I have brought him under the sound of the ministry, I purpose to bring him to Myself. I have ordained him to wear a crown and wave a palm, and be wrapped about with the fair white linen of the righteousness of saints. He shall be Mine when I make up My jewels. Out with you, intruders! Away, you devils! Away, you lusts! You may be called Legion, but I, JEHOVAH-JESUS, *cast* you out, for this man is Mine.” Lord, do it, do it this morning! The voice of the cry of Your people comes up for those who are afar off, that their vanities may be given up, and their sins may be dashed in pieces, that they may be Yours forever and ever.

IV. The last point is, ANOTHER CRY.

I wish I might hear this cry this morning, for then I should not hear it in the world to come, “*The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.*”

I have been talking to you, now I want you to talk for yourselves in your heart to God. There came a harvest of souls to this church from the very day when first we began to preach the gospel here, and we have gathered such numbers into the church as probably never were received into any one church in Europe in any age at one time, except in the days of the apostles. That harvest is only past so far as the blessing which we have received *has* been received, for the harvest still continues in all its fullness. But, ah! the harvest has missed *you*. Some of you have had to move away, or the Word ceases to be a blessing to you as it once was. This voice has grown stale to you, has no trumpet-ringing clang about it as it once had, “The harvest is past.”

Very blessed times have passed over this church. We have had a summer, oh! what divine warmth has been felt. The sun has shone strong in upon us, and every plant has breathed forth its perfume—every plant that the Lord has planted. But many a Monday night, many a prayer meeting night has gone, the summer has ended, and you are not saved! *You are not saved!*

Do you remember, some of you, that sermon in the Music Hall, from the text, “Compel them to come in”? [Sermon #227, Volume 5—COMPEL THEM TO COME IN] Then we had a harvest, and then we had a summer, but *you* were not compelled to come in. *You* were not saved! You recollect some Monday nights when we have been bowed down and broken in heart before God in prayer, we have then had harvests and summers, but *you* are not saved!

And now, last Monday night what a visitation we had! What a harvest! What a summer! But *you are not saved*. I wish you would put up that cry, “Now, Lord, I am not saved! Lord I am not saved! I am not saved from my hard heart! I am not saved from my love of sin! I am not saved from the guilt of sin! I am without God, without Christ, and a stranger to the commonwealth of Israel! I am not saved!”

There are some of you I could speak to very specifically, we pray for you, but you are not saved! You have a brother who prays for you, a sister who prays for you, a father and mother who have prayed for you—but still *you are not saved*! Husband! You have a wife who never ceases to intercede for you, but still *you are not saved*! Husband! You have a wife who never ceases to intercede for you, but you are not saved! We thought you would have been converted long ago, there have been many hopeful signs about you, but you have disappointed us, you are not saved!

Take heed, take heed, there may be more in the words that I now speak than if they were my words, for, to this day, God sometimes speaks to men prophetically by His truly sent ministers. The day is near with some of you, if you do not repent, when, tossing upon the bed of sickness you will have to cry in the sight of the approach of death, “The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and I am not saved.” You will look back upon these Sunday gatherings with a very different eye from that with which you look upon them now. You will remember your Gospel privileges and value them very differently from what you do now. When you seem to hear the tolling of your own death knell, then you will value the Sabbath chime. And take heed yet a little further!

There will come a day when you will lift up your eyes in hell, some of you, being in torments, and then, as you look up and see the people of God glorified at God’s right hand, you will have to say, “The harvest is past, and the summer is ended, and I am not saved.” And let me tell you, those words will ring very differently then from what they do now, when you have—

“To linger in eternal pain, yet death forever fly,”

to have to say, “I am not saved” will be dreadful. Then the Lord will come. We are looking for His coming, and when He comes His people shall reign with Him, they shall rise from the dead in triumph. And when their days of earthly reign shall be over, the great archangel shall sound the trumpet for the second resurrection, and when you wake up and find that the righteous have all risen before you, and have received their crowns and their rewards, then, as you see the harvest of God borne by the angelic reapers up to the sky, as you see the brightness of the glory of the new Jerusalem taken up into the clouds, to be withdrawn from the place where men shall stand to be judged, you will say, “The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.”

Oh! then you will cry, “Rocks, hide us! Mountains, fall upon us! We are not saved.” Those mountains shall have no ears for you—those rocks shall have no bowels of compassion for you, there shall only be a dread reverberation of your awful cry, “We are not saved—we are not saved!”

And when hell opens wide her jaws, and her tongue of fire shall lick up the ungodly, then, “We are not saved! We are not saved! We are not saved!” will be in sorrowful contrast to that ever-swelling, ever-increasing song, “We have washed our robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!”

Shall it be “Hallelujah!” sinner, or shall it be “We are not saved”? May God’s eternal grace work in you to will and to do of His own good pleasure, and so make you to work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, and then may the question be decided, and may you not have to say forever, “We are not saved.” May God bless these words for Christ Jesus’ sake. Amen.

Taken from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.